



Seal carved as a hedgehog

On display

Title/Description: Seal carved as a hedgehog

Born: 0720 BC c.

Object Type: seal

Materials: Faience

Measurements: h. 17 x w. 29 x d. 18 mm

Inscription: 'May Bastest grant happiness everyday'

Accession Number: 317

Historic Period: Third Intermediate Period (c. 720 BC), 8th Century BC

Production Place: Africa, Egypt

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

The upper part is carved *à jour* (undercut) as a hedgehog standing upon an oval base-plate, the fillings between front and rear legs being perforated to take a suspension filament. Its prickles are indicated by cross-hatching, and the eyes and ears by black dots under the hard, blue-green glaze. On the base within an oval border-line is inscribed intaglio a good wish: 'May Bastet grant happiness every day'. Bastet was a cat goddess whose cult was widespread in Egypt but was focused at Bubastis in the Delta. For discussion of the hedgehog in ancient Egypt, see von Droste zu Hülshoff (1980).

Provenance

Formerly in the MacGregor Collection.

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from K. J. Hewett in 1972.

Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.
